

## The Nature Conservancy – Arizona

### Tucson, AZ

Sept. 1, 2013 – August 31, 2014

Legislative District(s): 1,2,3,4,&9

#### PROGRAM FAST FACTS

Congressional District(s): 1, 2, 3, 4, 9  
State Legislative District(s): 1,6,8,13,14,28  
Service Area by County/City: 9 AZ  
Counties: Yavapai, Maricopa, Pinal, Pima, Cochise, Graham, Coconino, Greeley, Santa Cruz  
Project Federal Share: \$66,500  
Project Local Match: \$67,093  
Community Volunteers Recruited by members year 2012-13: 234  
Volunteer Hours Served: 2,461  
Value of Volunteer Hours: \$49,417  
\*2011 Independent Sector Rate for the Value of a Volunteer Hour in Arizona is \$20.08

#### **Community Need**

Our natural infrastructure consists of intact lands and waters that preserve wildlife habitat and safeguard species. These lands and waters also provide services for people, such as groundwater recharge, carbon sequestration, and recreational opportunities. They enhance our quality of life and sustain the character of our western landscapes. But most of our rivers and wetlands in Arizona have been lost or degraded, and many important upland areas need restoration. This emphasizes the compelling need to mobilize the communities around the importance that the natural areas will serve to support the urban growth that is expected and to motivate youth to see it as a real priority that actual labor can impact.

#### **National Priority Area: Environmental Stewardship**

##### Performance Goals

- 1500 acres of woodlands, riparian areas, and grasslands will be improved
- 45 miles of waterways and trails will be improved
- Working with 6 Verde River irrigation ditch companies and conducting and analyzing 40 stream flow measurements that will lead to management practices resulting in improved flow in the Verde River which in turn will support a healthy riparian and aquatic ecosystem for wildlife and humans.

#### **Performance Goals (continued)**

##### **National Priority Area: Capacity Building**

##### **Performance Goals:**

- Train 3,000 4<sup>th</sup> grade and middle school students on water conservation
- Build relationships in the community to inform about conservation priorities through participation in 50 community events and by engaging 100 youth in environmental education outdoor activities

#### **Program Activities**

The 5 members are placed in four types of activities.

##### **Stewardship Assistants**

Two members will work at four Conservancy preserves to map and control invasive species, monitor the effects of invasive plant treatment, participate in fire and fuels management, native



Members Jim McBride and Melissa Russell ©Ron Day

grasslands maintenance, repair and erect fencing to protect endangered species, forest restoration all leading to improving 1500 acres. In addition they will building and repair public access trails, install interpretive trail signs, stabilizing stream beds on 45 miles of stream and trails.

## **Program Activities , continued**

### Youth Education Outreach Coordinator

One member will work with Arizona Project WET coordinating teachers, community members and children to train youth about water needs and responsibilities in a water stressed state. They will direct students in learning scientific data collection techniques, learning about the source of their water, collecting information that identifies characteristics of healthy riparian areas, and presenting results at a public symposium.



Sam Morris, AmeriCorps member 2013-14 ©Tina Singer

### Conservation Community Building Coordinator

This member will design materials and presentations to educate community members about environmental conservation priorities. This will include working to develop a broader constituency for the future by developing materials, organizing outdoor educational activities about nature and conservation for 100 youth and participation in 50 community activities.

### Verde River Riparian Restoration Coordinator

This member will work cooperatively with Verde River irrigation ditch owners for better understanding of water use and irrigation needs. Currently the Verde River is severely dewatered in several stretches in the Verde Valley and as a result limits fish passage and the habitat is severely altered. Stream flow measurements will be taken and analyzed. This information will lead to improved irrigation practices and create incentives for creative water management that keeps more water in the river.

## **Program Impact**

In the first year of this grant members improved 2510 acres of land and 100 miles of stream and trails, reached 5835 students with water conservation education. The student's actions will save 10.1 million gallons of water in a year. Members recruited 234 volunteers who served 2461 hours.

## **Mission**

The mission of The Nature Conservancy is to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends.

## **Vision**

The Conservancy's vision is to leave a sustainable world for future generations.

## **History**

Our story is of a small group of inspired people who protected 60 acres of the Mianus River Gorge in upstate New York in 1955. They mortgaged their homes to buy the property, and in that singular act, The Nature Conservancy jump-started the land trust movement and set conservation on a new course. In Arizona the story began in 1966 after Arizona volunteers had overseen the purchase and ongoing protection of the first Arizona preserve—the Patagonia-Sonoita Creek Preserve. Since that time we protected or assisted in the special designation of 1.5 million acres of land and created a conservation blueprint for the state, secured the first water right to protect stream flow for the benefit of nature, completed the first voluntary land protection agreement—a conservation easement—in the state, and established a dozen nature preserves. Volunteers were the backbone of the Arizona Conservancy for many years and continue to play a substantial role with 500 volunteers dedicating 35,000 hours, the equivalent of 19 full time employees, during fiscal year 2013.

## **Partnerships**

Arizona Game and Fish  
Arizona State Parks  
Arizona Project WET/University of Arizona  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Friends of the Verde River  
Pima County  
Salt River Project  
U.S. Bureau of Land Management  
U.S. Forest Service